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Tenth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia

I. Introduction

1. By its resolution 1626 (2005) of 19 September 2005, the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) until 31 March 2006 and requested me to provide recommendations on a drawdown plan for UNMIL, including specific benchmarks and a tentative schedule, in my March 2006 report. The present report contains those recommendations and provides an update on major developments since my report of 7 December 2005 (S/2005/764).

II. Major developments since December 2005

Political

2. During the reporting period, political activity in Liberia was dominated by the successful completion of the two-year transition process set out in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 18 August 2003 and the handover from the National Transitional Government of Liberia to the new democratically elected Government. It may be recalled that George Weah's political party, the Congress for Democratic Change, initially challenged the final results of the run-off presidential elections, which were certified by the National Elections Commission on 23 November 2005, and threatened not to allow the inauguration of the new Government to proceed. On 16 December, the National Elections Commission concluded its hearings on the complaints of the Congress for Democratic Change of irregularities in the conduct of the run-off election and ruled that, while minor technical errors may have occurred in the electoral process, there had been no intent to commit fraud. On 21 December, in a commendable gesture, following appeals from several regional leaders, Mr. Weah announced that he would not challenge the Commission ruling in the Supreme Court.

3. On 13 January 2006, the new members of the House of Representatives elected Edwin Snowe (Independent) as Speaker of the House and Mulbah Tokpah (Congress for Democratic Change) as Deputy Speaker of the House. Isaac Wehyee Nyenabo (National Democratic Party of Liberia) was elected to serve as the President Pro Tempore of the Senate.

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4. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was sworn into office as President of the Republic of Liberia on 16 January 2006. In her inaugural address, President Johnson Sirleaf outlined the key priorities of her administration, including national reconciliation, political inclusion, sustainable development and economic governance reforms. The President stressed her determination to take early steps to improve the quality of life of average Liberians. She promised to "wage war" against corruption and announced that all persons appointed to high offices would be required to declare their personal assets. She also vowed not to allow Liberia to be used to destabilize other countries in the subregion.

5. On 17 January, the President started announcing nominations to the Cabinet, the Supreme Court and other key positions and on 27 January, the Senate commenced the statutory confirmation hearings for the nominees. The nominees are drawn from a wide range of ethnic, religious and political backgrounds, and include representatives of both indigenous and Americo-Liberian groups. As of 1 March, the Senate had confirmed 47 out of 200 nominees.

6. The nominations to Cabinet posts have not been without some controversy. On 11 February, the President announced the nomination of Frances Johnson-Morris, current Chairperson of the National Elections Commission and former Chief Justice, for the position of Minister of Justice, while James Fromayan, current co-Chairperson of the Commission, was nominated for the position of Chairperson of the Commission. In a press statement issued 12 February, the Congress for Democratic Change challenged those two nominations, claiming that the President was rewarding those nominees for ensuring her victory in the run-off presidential elections. Those nominations are currently under review by the Senate.

7. At the same time, the President has begun to decisively address the issue of governance and corruption. On 28 January, she ordered all political appointees of the National Transitional Government of Liberia to resign with immediate effect. On 30 January, she ordered an audit of the Transitional Government and requested transitional officials to seek permission before travelling overseas, pending the conclusion of the audit. In other initiatives designed to enhance transparency in the granting of Government contracts and concessions, the President declared null and void a contract between the National Port Authority of Liberia and Global Seals System, as well as all existing forestry concessions granted to timber companies under former administrations.

Security

8. During the reporting period, the security situation in Liberia remained generally stable but fragile. Disgruntled former armed forces personnel continued to challenge the ongoing restructuring of the Armed Forces of Liberia. Despite repeated orders from the Transitional Government, former armed forces personnel also refused to vacate the Camp Schiefflin barracks, the proposed training site for the new army, where they were residing with their families. On 14 January, they finally vacated the barracks, leaving behind several stripped and roofless buildings. Widows of former soldiers of the Armed Forces of Liberia also organized disruptions in Monrovia to protest non-payment of allowances and pensions. Members of the disbanded Anti-Terrorist Unit, a militia group established by former

President Charles Taylor, organized protests, claiming that they had been excluded from the security sector reform programme and demanding salary arrears.

9. The security situation in the subregion remained volatile, particularly because of the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire. There were concerns about the movement of armed groups across the border, the recruitment of former Liberian combatants, including children, for operations in Côte d'Ivoire; and the risk that Ivorians might seek refuge in Liberia in the event of escalating violence in Côte d'Ivoire. UNMIL troops, including the UNMIL Quick Reaction Force and military observers, conducted intensified air and ground patrols of the border areas. A joint task force, which was established under the National Transitional Government of Liberia, continued to investigate cases of recruitment of Liberians and, in January, an individual was arrested on suspicion of recruitment of Liberians to fight in Côte d'Ivoire. UNMIL also monitored the border between Liberia and the Guinée Forestière region of Guinea, because of its high concentration of refugees and strategic location in relation to Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

10. During the period under review, various Governments and intergovernmental and human rights organizations called on President Johnson Sirleaf to request the Government of Nigeria to transfer former Liberian President Charles Taylor to the Special Court for Sierra Leone, where he is under indictment for war crimes. President Johnson Sirleaf has been consulting regional leaders and other member States on this important matter.

Humanitarian

11. The humanitarian situation continued to improve during the period under review. Since my last report, some 10,280 refugees returned to Liberia with the assistance of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), bringing the number of registered refugees assisted to return to their place of origin by UNHCR to some 51,159. 182,146 registered refugees remain in various countries in West Africa. To date, 299,486 internally displaced persons have received return assistance, including food, while a further 24,336 are awaiting return packages. The World Food Programme and its partners also continued to distribute food to internally displaced persons, while the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, in collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Health Organization, vaccinated more than 1.2 million children in a nationwide polio immunization campaign.

Economic governance

12. Progress was made in the implementation of the Governance and Economic Management Assistance Programme. On 5 February, an international financial expert with co-signing authority assumed the post of Chief Administrator at the Central Bank of Liberia. International financial controllers for Liberia's state-owned enterprises, as well as an international concessions expert and budget expert for the Ministry of Lands, Mines and Energy and the Bureau of Budget, respectively, are in the process of being recruited. The Programme technical team prepared a memorandum of understanding between Liberia's state-owned enterprises, the Central Bank of Liberia, and commercial banks for the creation of consolidated

accounts, and drafted the terms of reference for an independent review of contracts and concessions, which had been earlier approved by the Transitional Government. The report of the anti-corruption study conducted by the United Kingdom Department for International Development and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was also presented to the new Government.

13. President Johnson Sirleaf welcomed the Programme and called on donors to develop integrated capacity-building mechanisms to facilitate the eventual Liberian ownership of the Programme. The Economic Governance Steering Committee and the Programme technical team continued to meet regularly to monitor progress in the implementation of the Programme. The Steering Committee also adopted a monitoring framework to evaluate the implementation of the Programme process.

14. The dividends from tighter control of Government revenue are already becoming evident. The inflow of revenue into the Ministry of Finance was higher in January 2006 than it was in January 2005.

III. Assessment mission

15. In order to develop recommendations on plans for the future direction of UNMIL, including specific benchmarks, as requested by the Council in its resolution 1626 (2005), it was essential to conduct a comprehensive review of the status of implementation of all aspects of the Mission mandate, as set out in Security Council resolution 1509 (2003). Accordingly, an interdepartmental mission led by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and comprising representatives of the Department of Political Affairs, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Department of Safety and Security, UNDP and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights travelled to Liberia from 3 to 15 February to conduct that assessment.

16. In conducting its assessment, the mission met with a broad cross-section of Liberian and international stakeholders in Monrovia and in the interior of the country, including President Johnson Sirleaf, several Government ministers and ministers-designate, members of the Legislature, representatives of political parties, civil society, international and national non-governmental organizations, as well as the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the International Contact Group on Liberia, UNMIL and the United Nations country team.

17. In addition to taking stock of the completed and uncompleted aspects of the mandate of UNMIL, the assessment mission conducted a comprehensive assessment of the security situation in the country, including a threat analysis; reviewed the priorities and plan of action of the newly elected Government; surveyed views on the future role of UNMIL; and determined the adjustments that need to be made to the Mission mandate, size and configuration during the post-transition phase. The assessment mission also examined the respective roles of the Government, international and regional partners and the United Nations country team in the consolidation of peace in the country.

A. Status of implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Liberia

18. Security Council resolution 1509 (2003) mandated UNMIL to support the implementation of the ceasefire agreement signed by the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy, the Movement for Democracy in Liberia and the Government of Liberia on 17 June 2003; develop and implement the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and rehabilitation programme for all armed parties; provide security at key Government installations; facilitate the provision of humanitarian assistance; contribute to the protection and promotion of human rights; support humanitarian and human rights activities; support the national security sector reform programme, including the restructuring of the national police and the army; assist the Government in re-establishing State authority throughout the country; support the development of the capacity of the Liberia judicial and correctional institutions; assist the Government in restoring proper administration of natural resources; and assist the Government in the preparation of national elections.

19. By resolution 1638 (2005), the Security Council expanded the mandate of UNMIL to include the apprehension and detention of former President Charles Taylor in the event of his return to Liberia and his subsequent transfer to the Special Court for Sierra Leone. By resolution 1626 (2005), the Council further expanded the mandate of UNMIL to include providing security protection to the Special Court for Sierra Leone after the withdrawal of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone.

20. The assessment mission broadly concluded that UNMIL had completed many aspects of its initial mandate and had made substantial progress in implementing several remaining key tasks. However, while the overwhelming presence of 15,000 United Nations military and 1,115 police personnel had provided the security environment that had enabled the successful implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, the security situation in Liberia and in neighbouring countries remains fragile and key unfinished tasks need to be urgently completed in order to ensure sustainable peace and stability in the country.

Disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and rehabilitation

21. During the transition period, UNMIL disarmed and demobilized 101,495 combatants and collected and destroyed some 28,000 weapons, 34,000 unexploded ordnance and 6.5 million rounds of small arms ammunition. Since the formal closure of the disarmament and demobilization programme in November 2004, UNMIL has continued to collect and destroy residual weapons and ammunition, voluntarily surrendered or discovered, through search operations. This ongoing effort has so far resulted in the collection of 462 weapons, 59,972 small arms ammunition and 671 heavier munitions. In addition, UNDP is implementing the Community Arms Collection for Development Programme, which provides community development projects in exchange for weapons in Grand Gedeh, Lofa and Nimba counties. This programme will be progressively extended to other counties as funding permits.

22. Some 65,000 out of the 101,495 demobilized combatants have so far benefited from reintegration and rehabilitation opportunities through projects funded by the UNDP Trust Fund and by bilateral and multilateral donors. Approximately 37,000 ex-combatants are still waiting to be placed in reintegration programmes. While

funding is available for the majority of those former combatants, about $5 million is urgently needed to provide reintegration opportunities for some 5,125 former combatants. In addition, some 612 ex-combatants who identified themselves as foreign nationals during the disarmament and demobilization process are still waiting to be repatriated to their home countries.

Reform of the Liberian National Police

23. The restructuring of the Liberian National Police has made progress, but the shortfall in funding for the demobilization of ineligible officers has impeded the restructuring process. To date, UNMIL has trained some 1,442 Liberian National Police out of a targeted 3,500, as well as 155 Liberian Seaport Police and 358 Special Security Service personnel. A further 546 police cadets are currently undergoing field training, while 161 cadets are receiving basic training. The rehabilitation of police stations in outlying areas of the country is also progressing, albeit slowly, with some 62 police stations in the 15 counties recommissioned so far.

24. However, the emerging view is that the Liberian National Police urgently requires continued mentoring, as well as basic equipment, uniforms, arms and ammunition, vehicles and communication equipment. Moreover, police facilities at the level of zones and depots and in outlying areas require extensive renovation and rehabilitation. At the same time, members of the former national police and special security service who are not eligible to join the restructured police service are still awaiting severance payments. They must be officially retired from the police service as soon as possible, as they constitute a negative influence over the newly trained officers. Another challenge will be to ensure that members of the new police force receive regular monthly salaries. Finally, the rationalization and streamlining of other security agencies that have policing functions, such as the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization, requires urgent attention.

Reform of the Armed Forces of Liberia

25. The demobilization of the former Armed Forces of Liberia was completed in December 2005 and, in a commendable bilateral effort, the United States launched its recruitment and restructuring programme for the new Liberian army on 18 January 2006. At the request of the new Government, the United States plans to recruit and train approximately 2,000 military personnel, who will constitute the new restructured armed forces. As of 1 March, 3,436 applicants had signed up to join the new army. However, only 1,524 applicants had passed the initial screening. The training plan has yet to be finalized, but it is anticipated that basic training will begin in mid-2006.

26. The overall mission and strength of the currently proposed 2,000 Liberian military personnel will require careful consideration, given the volatile situation in the subregion and the long-term external threats to the security of Liberia. In that regard, a number of factors will need to be carefully balanced in determining its eventual size, including the ability of the Government to financially sustain a professional and well-equipped army, the national requirements of the country and potential external threats.

Extension of State authority

27. UNMIL has facilitated the return of over 2,200 Government officials to the counties, including superintendents and customs and immigrations officials. However, the authority of the Government is still limited in most parts of the country. The dilapidated condition of Government structures, the absence of basic services and irregular payment of civil servant salaries, have contributed to the slow pace of return of Government officials to the counties. Through its quick-impact projects, UNMIL has to date supported the construction of three branches of the Central Bank in Tubmanburg, Zwedru and Voinjama, which will allow civil servant salaries to be paid in the counties.

Promotion of human rights, national reconciliation and justice

28. Some progress had been made in the promotion and protection of human rights. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Independent National Commission on Human Rights have been established. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was formally launched on 20 February and the Independent national Commission on Human Rights is in the process of appointing members in a transparent and inclusive manner and in conformity with the Paris Principles.

29. In addition, progress has been made in strengthening national legal, judicial and correctional institutions. The vetting and appointment process for judges and magistrates has been completed and new laws have been enacted including the rape law, the jury law and a law to provide for the financial autonomy of the judiciary. Several members of the legal and judicial system have also benefited from the comprehensive legal education and training programme of UNMIL. In addition, eight prisons were opened and 79 corrections officers have been recruited and are undergoing training.

30. However, State institutions and mechanisms responsible for ensuring effective human rights protection for citizens, including the police, the judiciary and the justice system, remain very fragile and underdeveloped. In addition, court buildings are either non-existent or in a state of disrepair in many counties, while the dearth of qualified judicial and legal nationals has contributed to the denial of due process and fair trials for many accused persons. Investigations are not being conducted in a timely manner, resulting in the protracted detention of accused persons, often in overcrowded prison facilities. There has also been a significant increase in reported incidents of sexual and gender-based violence, particularly rape and abuses occurring within the context of traditional practices. The denial of social and economic rights, including the rights to basic health care, primary education and adequate social amenities, primarily water and electricity, also remains a major concern, especially for those living outside Monrovia.

31. The Government will require support in restoring the rule of law, particularly in the development of a national human rights policy and plan of action; the establishment of appropriate human rights and transitional justice mechanisms; the strengthening of the legal, judicial and corrections system; the development of justice mechanisms to deal with violence against women and children; and operationalizing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Restoring proper administration of natural resources and meeting the conditions for the lifting of sanctions

32. The lack of State control over the natural resources of Liberia remains a potential source of instability. The illegal occupation and exploitation of rubber plantations, including the Guthrie, Sinoe, Cavalla and Cocopa plantations, needs to be urgently addressed. In that regard, the Government and the United Nations have recently established a joint task force to review the existing concession and management agreements, the human rights situation and labour conditions on rubber plantations, and the continued occupation and exploitation of these plantations by ex-combatants. There are also large numbers of ex-combatants and unemployed youth engaged in illegal diamond and gold mining in many parts of the country.

33. The Government has made steady progress in meeting the conditions to join the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme. However, the Government urgently needs funding and technical assistance to support its efforts to join the Kimberley Process. The Forestry Development Authority is making progress in meeting the conditions for lifting timber sanctions with the support of UNMIL, and in collaboration with the Liberia Forestry Initiative, which is a partnership of Government, international and non-governmental organizations. As mentioned above, by Executive Order No. 1 of 6 February 2006, the President rendered all forestry concessions null and void. She also ordered the establishment of a Forestry Reform Monitoring Committee to take measures to institutionalize the participation of communities and civil society in forest management in a transparent manner.

B. Humanitarian and socio-economic challenges

34. The assessment mission found that while humanitarian conditions in the country have improved, many communities remain very vulnerable owing to an absence of critical infrastructure and resources. Civil administration, which should provide a safety net for vulnerable populations, is also largely absent at the county and district levels, which seriously limits the prospects for an early transition from relief assistance to sustainable rehabilitation and recovery in many communities. Because of impassable roads, particularly during the rainy season, United Nations agencies and other humanitarian actors do not have sustained access to vulnerable communities, which has resulted in an uneven distribution of aid resources throughout the country. While UNMIL engineers and members of the United Nations country team have undertaken rehabilitation work on important road networks to facilitate the return of internally displaced persons and refugees, much more remains to be done.

35. Basic services are yet to be established in many parts of the country. There are no functioning public utilities, and the vast majority of Liberians have no access to electricity, water and basic sanitation facilities or health care. Almost all medical services are provided by international non-governmental organizations and United Nations agencies. The education system is dilapidated, with a dearth of qualified teachers and available resources to rehabilitate school buildings. Roads and bridges, which are needed to open up markets, increase employment, sustain humanitarian access to rural areas and expand the overall protection environment, are in dire need of repairs.

36. Liberia is also facing formidable economic and social challenges. The Government will need to expedite its efforts to generate and manage its own resources. In particular, it will need to focus on meeting the conditions for the lifting of diamond and timber sanctions, which would provide the revenues for national reconstruction and economic recovery. The management of other critical resources, such as gold, rubber and cocoa, will also need to be given priority attention.

37. The Government will also need support in meeting the conditions to clear its $3.2 billion debt arrears. These conditions include the implementation of an IMF staff-monitored programme, the establishment of a Poverty Reduction Growth Facility and meeting the Heavily Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) Initiative completion point. In the short to medium term, the major challenge will be how to mobilize the sizeable and urgently required resources needed to undertake post-conflict reconstruction activities in the country.

C. Security challenges and threat analysis

38. The assessment mission carried out a comprehensive review of the security challenges in the country, including a threat analysis. The analysis confirmed that although progress had been made in stabilizing the country, the security situation in Liberia remains fragile. In that regard, a coordinated and sustained effort to consolidate stability, re-establish the rule of law, address potential threats to security and avert a possible spillover from neighbouring countries will be required.

39. In conducting the security assessment, the mission identified a number of potential sources of instability, including former personnel of the Liberian armed forces dissatisfied with severance and pension payments; ex-combatants awaiting reintegration and rehabilitation opportunities; members of the former Anti-Terrorist Unit excluded from the Armed Forces of Liberia demobilization exercise; ex-combatants occupying and illegally exploiting rubber plantations; other groups illegally exploiting the country's minerals; political groups marginalized by the recent realignment of Liberian political forces; and individuals who stand to lose influence as a result of reforms of President Johnson Sirleaf, in particular her anti-corruption initiatives and the cancellation of Government contracts and concessions.

40. Several pervasive challenges were noted, such as the extreme poverty in which a large segment of the population still lives; the inability of the authorities to provide basic social services, including proper sanitation, health care, clean water and electricity; the high rate of unemployment, particularly among youths; criminality countrywide, especially burglaries, robberies and street muggings; and the high concentration of ex-combatants in Monrovia. In addition, the potential for increased ethnic tensions and disputes over property rights and land ownership as refugees, internally displaced persons and former combatants return to their communities of origin was noted.

41. The unstable situation in Côte d'Ivoire continues to pose a significant external threat to the stability of Liberia and to subregional security. Of particular concern are the possible movement of armed groups from Côte d'Ivoire into Liberia, the recruitment of former combatants from Liberia for operations in Côte d'Ivoire and the influx of Ivorians seeking refuge from violence in Côte d'Ivoire. Any possible change in the current exile status of Charles Taylor may also have security implications.

D. The plan of action of the Government

42. The Government informed the assessment mission of its agenda for the reconstruction and development of Liberia and of its establishment of the Liberia Reconstruction and Development Committee to coordinate its reconstruction and development activities and to oversee the execution of key deliverables, both in the short and long term. The Committee, which is chaired by the President, oversees four separate subcommittees, which are each chaired by a key Minister. Two international partners serve as the vice-chairpersons of each subcommittee. The subcommittees are to focus on four priority areas or "pillars" including security, economic revitalization, basic services and infrastructure, and the rule of law and good governance. The Government is currently in the process of consolidating those priorities into a national strategy in close cooperation with UNMIL, the United Nations country team and other international partners.

43. The four pillars listed above are central to the short-term (150 days) and long-term (1,000 days) reconstruction agenda of the Government. President Johnson Sirleaf has promised to take steps within her first 150 days in office to improve, at least minimally, the quality of life of average Liberians. Her 150-day action plan focuses on some key deliverables and "quick win" projects, such as the partial restoration of electricity, the repair of roads and the rehabilitation of Government infrastructure. Resource mobilization will be essential in the short term to ensure that adequate resources are available to enable the Liberia Reconstruction and Development Committee to effectively drive the implementation of the 150-day plan.

44. The long-term agenda of the President aims at achieving certain key objectives which will ensure durable peace and stability in Liberia. The four pillars are central to that agenda. The "security" subcommittee will work on developing an integrated national defence policy, with appropriate national defence structures. The focus of the "economic revitalization" subcommittee will be on generating employment opportunities, revitalizing the agricultural sector, improving the investment climate and meeting the conditions for the lifting of sanctions. The road network of the country, as well as its transportation, electricity, water and sanitation, and health-care services, will be reviewed by the "basic services and infrastructure" subcommittee, while the "rule of law and good governance subcommittee" will attend to national legal, judicial and correctional institutions, legislative and constitutional reforms, decentralization, national reconciliation, human rights and civil service reform.

IV. Proposed adjustments to the United Nations Mission in Liberia

A. Adapting the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Liberia for the consolidation phase

45. In the light of the findings outlined in paragraphs 18 to 33, the assessment mission concluded that, although UNMIL has completed many of the core responsibilities mandated by Security Council resolution 1509 (2003), several critical tasks remain unfinished, including assisting the Government with the

reintegration of war-affected persons and ex-combatants; security sector reform; the consolidation of State authority throughout the country; the promotion of human rights and national reconciliation; the rehabilitation of the legal, judicial and correctional system and restoration of the rule of law; the implementation of the Governance and Economic Management Assistance Programme; and the restoration of proper administration over natural resources.

46. Based on the security threats identified in paragraphs 38 through 41, the assessment mission determined that a coordinated and sustained effort would be required to consolidate the gains made thus far. In addition, it was agreed by the assessment mission, the Government, UNMIL, the United Nations country team and international partners that there was a need for a consolidation phase during which UNMIL could focus on an adjusted mandate. That consolidation phase would last for a period of up to two years.

47. The priority tasks identified for UNMIL during the consolidation period are:

(a) maintaining a stable and secure environment;

(b) assisting the Government in completing the reintegration and rehabilitation programme for ex-combatants;

(c) facilitating the completion of the return and resettlement of refugees and internally displaced persons;

(d) accelerating the training and institutional development of the Liberian National Police and other security agencies, as well as the demobilization of the former police;

(e) assisting the Government in the restructuring of the Armed Forces of Liberia;

(f) assisting the Government in the consolidation of State authority throughout the country;

(g) assisting the Government in meeting the conditions for the lifting of diamond and timber sanctions;

(h) supporting the Government in building the capacity of State institutions;

(i) assisting the Government in rebuilding the culture of respect for human rights and the rule of law;

(j) assisting the Government in strengthening and rebuilding the capacity of judicial institutions; and

(k) assisting the Government in the implementation of the Governance and Economic Management Assistance Programme and other initiatives to ensure national revenues are captured and utilized for the public good.

B. Adjustments to the configuration of the Mission

48. The assessment mission, the Government, civil society, international partners, UNMIL and the United Nations country team all shared the view that it was too early for a major drawdown of UNMIL. The consensus was that a significant United Nations presence would continue to be indispensable during the consolidation

phase, in order to guarantee peace and stability in the country and to provide the necessary time for the new Government to establish its authority and launch its programme for national reconstruction and development. At the same time, it was recognized that since some of the initial tasks assigned to UNMIL had been completed, a review of the size and configuration of the Mission would be appropriate.

(a) Military component

49. After conducting a careful troop-to-task analysis, the assessment mission concluded that, in the absence of an immediate armed threat within Liberia, and bearing in mind the progress made in the implementation of resolution 1509 (2003), an adjustment to the UNMIL military component by reducing one infantry battalion in mid-2006 and another infantry battalion in early 2007 would be appropriate. The mission also acknowledged that the troop strength of UNMIL would be reduced by 250 troops by 31 March 2006, in order to bring it within the authorized troop strength of 15,000, in keeping with Security Council resolution 1626 (2005). Further adjustments would continue to be considered as the situation permits, without compromising the security of Liberia or the effectiveness of United Nations operations in the country.

50. During the consolidation period, the primary task of the military component of UNMIL will be to maintain a stable and secure environment and to protect civilians, key government installations and United Nations personnel and assets. At the same time, the Mission will continue to undertake cordon and search operations to retrieve weapons throughout the country and extend support to the UNDP Community Arms Collection for Development programme. It will also provide security support to the Special Court for Sierra Leone and engage in more proactive and flexible air and ground patrolling, especially along the borders, to monitor the possible recruitment of former combatants by Ivorian parties or the influx of armed elements from neighbouring countries, particularly Côte d'Ivoire. The use of UNMIL air assets, in a rapid response capacity, will also increase. The assessment mission also determined that measures should be taken to enhance the efficiency of UNMIL military observer activities.

51. The Liberian people and the donor community were unanimous in requesting that the engineering assets of UNMIL be used to accelerate road rehabilitation in the countryside, with donors providing the necessary material and local human resources. The World Bank and the European Commission have agreed to allocate funds for that purpose on a pilot basis.

(b) Police component

52. During the consolidation phase, the UNMIL police component will continue to provide extensive assistance to the Liberian police. The national police force forms one of the key pillars in the architecture of an effective security sector and must be developed as the principal instrument for maintaining domestic order and for dealing with internal security threats. In that regard, the UNMIL role will need to evolve from policing to supporting institutional development, advising and mentoring. To facilitate that transition, United Nations police specialists in the fields of diamond policing, immigration and border security, as well as forensic experts and officers experienced in Interpol operations, will need to be recruited.

53. In line with the careful drawdown of UNMIL troops and in view of the potential for increased public disorder, given the heightened expectations of the population following the inauguration of the new Government, the assessment mission recommended the deployment of an additional formed police unit. The assessment team was of the view that it would be important to complement reductions in the troop strength with an increase in the primacy of the policing functions of the Mission. That additional unit, to be deployed in a major population centre, would enable UNMIL to respond effectively and promptly to situations of public unrest, bearing in mind the potential and current threats to stability outlined in paragraphs 38 through 41, and the security risks that will inevitably arise from the implementation of the far-reaching reforms of the President. The deployment of that unit will also provide the Liberian Police Support Unit with additional time to develop the practical experience it requires to eventually take over those responsibilities from UNMIL.

(c) Civilian component

54. In order to facilitate the completion of the remaining aspects of its mandate, UNMIL will need to reconfigure some of its civilian operations. The assessment mission recommended that the Mission should deploy more of its senior political, human rights and rule-of-law specialists into the interior of the country to support activities in their respective areas and enhance its overall coordination role in the sectors. Moreover, in order to support the capacity-building initiatives of the Government in State institutions, the assessment mission recommended that UNMIL deploy qualified expert personnel from existing resources within its civil affairs component to State institutions, in collaboration with national authorities, as appropriate and where required.

C. Drawdown of the Mission

55. The assessment team proposed that the above adjustments to the troop and police strength of UNMIL should be followed by a drawdown of the Mission, which should begin in early 2007, security conditions permitting. The drawdown of UNMIL troops would be closely tied to the achievement of specific benchmarks that recognize the increasing capacity of the Government to assume responsibility for the maintenance of stability, law and order throughout the country, as well as progress made in the reintegration and rehabilitation of ex-combatants and war-affected populations, security sector reform, the consolidation of State authority, meeting the conditions for the lifting of sanctions, strengthening the rule of law and human rights; and improvements in the situation in the subregion, in particular in Côte d'Ivoire. I intend to provide the Council in due course with the elaborated benchmarks and timelines, which will guide the gradual and calibrated drawdown of UNMIL.

V. Forging a partnership in the consolidation phase

56. During the consolidation phase, it will be important for the Government, the United Nations and other international partners to forge an effective partnership aimed at safeguarding and building upon the gains made so far, completing all

remaining critical tasks and placing Liberia on a solid road to economic recovery and development. The coordination of efforts and a clear division of responsibilities will be vital in ensuring the effectiveness of such a partnership.

A. The role of the Government of Liberia

57. The Government will need to create the appropriate political environment and extend the necessary cooperation to ensure that the assistance provided by the international partners yields the maximum benefits for the country. The Government should also work towards maximizing the collection of revenues required to implement its most critical programmes, fight corruption and create the necessary conditions to attract private foreign investment. It must also move rapidly to meet the conditions for the lifting of sanctions. In addition, the Government will need to give priority to defining key policies and enacting legislation to support its critical reform initiatives. In particular, it will need to elaborate a national security policy, establish legal and regulatory frameworks for the management of resources and develop programmes aimed at public administration reform. The timely implementation of the Governance and Economic Management Assistance Programme will complement the elaboration and implementation of these critical policies.

58. President Johnson Sirleaf has already demonstrated her desire to institute a number of bold initiatives to address corruption, including administrative reforms that focus on streamlining central government, creating an efficient and non-partisan civil service and decentralizing the Government to ensure better delivery of public services to the 15 counties of Liberia. The draft code of conduct for public servants, prepared by the Governance Reform Commission, is currently under review. The President has also announced her intention to hold a national dialogue to review the Constitution of Liberia. These important initiatives will need to be underpinned by a commitment to democratic principles and inclusiveness in the political process.

B. The role of the international community

59. Liberia's international partners have made a considerable contribution to the implementation of the peace process in Liberia. During the consolidation phase, they will need to remain focused and engaged to provide support to the Liberian Government. The endorsement of the Governance and Economic Management Assistance Programme by the new Government is a strong indication of its desire to undertake reforms aimed at significantly improving economic governance. As the implementation of that Programme begins to enhance accountability and transparency in the management of public finance, it would be important for the IMF and the World Bank to assist the Government to find ways to overcome the substantial debt burden inherited from previous administrations.

60. Moreover, in order for the Government reform agenda to bear fruit, it will be important for donors to continue to generously contribute resources for priority programmes, such as for the reintegration of war-affected persons and ex-combatants; security sector reform; the rehabilitation of the legal, judicial and correctional system; the implementation of the Governance and Economic Management Assistance Programme; the proper administration of natural resources;

economic revitalization; the restoration of basic services, particularly electricity and clean water; and the rehabilitation of vital infrastructure. I appeal to the international community to support the Government, through timely contributions, in its efforts to elaborate a national capacity-building programme within the context of the Governance and Economic Management Assistance Programme, which will assist in ensuring that relevant skills, knowledge and expertise are transferred to Liberians in the earliest possible time frame. Where the Government demonstrates the will to reform, capacity-building programmes will form the linchpin to ensuring long-term recovery and reconstruction. The planned partner's conference, to be held in mid-2006, will provide an excellent opportunity to galvanize the support of the international community for the national recovery strategy of the Government.

61. The very important role being played by ECOWAS, the African Union and other regional partners in Liberia cannot be overemphasized. From the outset, ECOWAS has been instrumental in bringing the warring factions to the table to resolve their differences, in stabilizing the security situation in the country and in successfully settling disputes that threatened to derail the peace process. Despite many challenges, they have remained fully engaged and committed to the full restoration of peace and stability in Liberia. The continued support and engagement of regional partners in the consolidation phase will be vital.

C. The role of the United Nations country team

62. The United Nations country team will continue to be an indispensable partner in laying the foundation for the establishment of durable peace and stability in Liberia. The United Nations country team is preparing a common country assessment to identify development challenges, priorities and areas of United Nations system cooperation in Liberia, which will lead to the creation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework. It will also guide the Government's national reconstruction and development strategy and its interim poverty reduction strategy.

VI. Inter-mission cooperation and subregional responsibilities of the United Nations Mission in Liberia

63. In its resolution 1609 (2005), the Security Council authorized me to temporarily redeploy military and civilian police personnel between UNMIL and the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) to deal with challenges that cannot be handled within the authorized personnel ceiling of either Mission. In this regard, pending consideration by the Security Council of the recommendations contained in my report of 3 January 2006 (S/2006/2), concerning long-term reinforcement of UNOCI, I requested the Council, through my letter dated 1 February 2006 (S/2006/71), to approve the temporary redeployment of up to one mechanized infantry battalion and one formed police unit from UNMIL to UNOCI, for an initial period of three months.

64. By its resolution 1657 (2006), the Council authorized the immediate transfer of one infantry company from UNMIL to UNOCI until 31 March 2006, without prejudice to any further decisions by the Council on the level of troops of UNMIL. In the same resolution, the Council expressed its intention to keep under review

possible additional redeployments of troops between UNMIL and UNOCI. Earlier, in its resolution 1652 (2006), the Council expressed its intention to review the tasks and the troop level of UNOCI when it considers the present report on UNMIL, taking into account the situation in both Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia.

65. Recent efforts to implement Security Council resolution 1609 (2005) have presented a serious dilemma. As noted above, in its resolution 1657 (2006), the Council approved the transfer of only one company from UNMIL to reinforce UNOCI, although a request was made for a larger deployment. The Council was also unable to expedite consideration of the recommendations for strengthening UNOCI, contained in my report of 3 January 2006 (S/2006/2). This dilemma raises a question about the efficacy of the inter-mission military cooperation arrangements provided in resolution 1609 (2005), especially in an emergency situation. Therefore, while the proposed adjustments to the troop strength of UNMIL in mid-2006 may provide an opportunity to further reinforce UNOCI within the framework of resolution 1609 (2005), it is still essential for the Council to consider the overall recommendations presented in my report of 3 January 2006 (S/2006/2).

66. Should the Council, however, decide that the two Missions should rely only on the arrangements provided in resolution 1609 (2005) to reinforce each other as appropriate, it would be necessary to ensure that UNMIL retains the capacity to both reinforce UNOCI effectively and in a timely manner and to backstop the guard force assigned to protect the Special Court for Sierra Leone. In addition, in order to ensure the necessary efficiency in implementing those arrangements, it would be important to grant me sufficient latitude to transfer troops between the two Missions while keeping the Council informed.

VII. Financial aspects

67. The General Assembly, by its resolution 59/305, appropriated the amount of $722.4 million, equivalent to $60.2 million per month, for the maintenance of UNMIL for the period from 1 July 2005 to 30 June 2006. Should the Security Council approve my recommendation concerning the changes in the configuration of UNMIL contained in paragraphs 48 to 53, additional resources for the operation of the Mission for the 2005/06 period, if required, would be sought from the General Assembly during its resumed sixtieth session.

68. As at 30 November 2005, unpaid assessed contributions to the Special Account for UNMIL amounted to $251.6 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations as at that date amounted to $1,988.3 million. As at 31 December 2005, amounts owed to troop and formed police contributors totalled $89.9 million. Reimbursement for contingent-owned equipment costs and reimbursement for troops and formed police have been made for the period up to September 2005 and October 2005 respectively, in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule.

VIII. Observations

69. The installation of the new democratically elected Government of Liberia on 16 January marked the completion of the two-year transition process set out in the

Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed by the Liberian parties in August 2003. As outlined in paragraphs 18 to 33 of this report, during the transition period, UNMIL completed many of its initially assigned tasks. The National Transitional Government of Liberia, with the support of UNMIL, the United Nations agencies and other international partners, also successfully implemented most of the key provisions of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

70. However, a number of tasks that are critical to the sustainability of peace and stability in Liberia have yet to be fully implemented. These include the reintegration of ex-combatants, the resettlement of internally displaced persons and returning refugees, the restructuring and reform of the armed forces and police service, the consolidation of State authority throughout the country and the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In addition, the Transitional Government was not able to meet the conditions for the lifting of timber and diamond sanctions.

71. Despite considerable overall improvement, the security situation in the country remains fragile and continues to be anchored on the presence of UNMIL, as the new police service is still in its formative stages and the recruitment for the new armed forces is just beginning. Continued efforts are required to manage the internal potential threats to stability, in particular, possible violent reactions from elements that stand to lose from the Government's far-reaching reform programme, disgruntled ex-combatants, former members of the armed forces and police service and frustrated unemployed youth. Increased monitoring of Liberia's borders is also essential, given the volatile situation in the subregion, particularly the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire.

72. For the above reasons, the continued presence of UNMIL remains indispensable during the consolidation phase. I therefore recommend the extension of the mandate of UNMIL for a period of one year, until 31 March 2007. I further recommend that the Security Council approve the proposals to adjust UNMIL military strength as proposed in paragraph 49. In addition, in order to help enhance police primacy, I recommend that the Mission police strength be increased by one formed police unit, as proposed in paragraph 53. These proposed adjustments would ensure that UNMIL retains sufficient capacity to provide a reliable security umbrella for the new Government to fully establish its authority and take the necessary measures, with the support of its international partners, to safeguard and build on the gains made so far. I would also be grateful if the revisions to the mandate of UNMIL, as outlined in paragraph 47, could be approved. It is my intention to submit a timetable for a calibrated drawdown of UNMIL, with specific benchmarks and timelines in due course. The Mission is currently in the process of elaborating this timetable.

73. Liberia has entered a new era that presents not only the challenges that I have identified, but also hope and new opportunities. In the brief period since her inauguration, President Johnson Sirleaf has shown commendable determination to harness the opportunities and fulfil the hopes of the people of Liberia, who have given her the mandate to take the country on the long journey of recovery and renewal. She has appointed an inclusive Government, taken bold initiatives to remove corruption, embraced the Governance and Economic Management Assistance Programme, adopted a reconstruction and development agenda and assured neighbouring countries that the new Liberia will play a constructive role in the subregion.

74. In the coming months, the Government will need to forge an enhanced partnership with the United Nations family, the donor community, ECOWAS and the African Union, for the consolidation of peace and for taking forward the reconstruction and development agenda of Liberia. The Government must actively take ownership of that agenda and manage the resources of the country for the benefit of the people. For their part, the international partners of Liberia should be ready to extend the timely and necessary support to the new Government and to ensure that their significant investment in the country over the last few years will lead to sustainable peace and development. At the same time, the United Nations family will continue to play a critical role in laying the foundation for durable peace and stability in Liberia.

75. In conclusion, I would like to commend my Special Representative and all civilian and military staff of UNMIL for their contributions to the peace process in difficult and challenging circumstances. I would also like to express my gratitude to the countries that are contributing military and police personnel to the Mission, ECOWAS and its mediator, General Abdulsalami Abubakar, the African Union, the International Contact Group on the Mano River Basin, United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and humanitarian organizations, as well as to multilateral and bilateral donors and international and local non-governmental organizations, for their steadfast efforts to return peace to Liberia.

Annex

United Nations Mission in Liberia: military and civilian police strength as at 1 March 2006

	Military				*Police*
Country	*Military observers*	*Staff officers*	*Troops*	*Total*	*Civilian police*
Argentina					1
Bangladesh	17	12	3 176	3 205	29
Benin	4	1		5	
Bolivia	3	1		4	
Bosnia and Herzegovina				0	3
Brazil		1		1	
Bulgaria	2			2	
China	5	8	557	570	25
Croatia		3		3	
Czech Republic	3			3	3
Denmark	2			2	
Ecuador	3	1		4	
Egypt	8			8	
El Salvador	3			3	2
Ethiopia	17	8	2 520	2 545	
Fiji				0	29
Finland		3		3	
France		1		1	
Gambia	5			5	30
Germany			15	15	5
Ghana	11	6	846	863	39
Indonesia	3			3	
Ireland		5	427	432	
Jamaica				0	4
Jordan	8	7	115	130	135
Kenya	3	4		7	27
Kyrgyzstan	4			4	3
Malawi		2		2	18
Malaysia	10			10	
Mali	4	1		5	
Mongolia		2	248	250	
Namibia	3	4	856	863	6
Nepal	3	2	40	45	256
Niger	3			3	2

	Military				Police
Country	Military observers	Staff officers	Troops	Total	Civilian police
Nigeria	18	11	1 938	1 967	162
Norway				0	6
Pakistan	16	11	2 720	2 747	5
Paraguay	3	1		4	
Peru	3	2		5	
Philippines	3	4	165	172	26
Poland	2			2	3
Portugal				0	
Republic of Korea	1	1		2	
Republic of Moldova	3	0		3	
Romania	3			3	
Russian Federation	7			7	17
Samoa				0	4
Senegal	3	3	598	604	
Serbia and Montenegro	6			6	4
South Africa				0	
Sri Lanka				0	11
Sweden	0	6	230	236	10
Togo	2	0		2	
Turkey				0	34
Uganda				0	21
Ukraine	3	1	297	301	11
United Kingdom		3		3	
United States of America	5	4		9	32
Uruguay				0	
Yemen				0	4
Zambia	2			2	27
Zimbabwe				0	22
Total	**204**	**119**	**14 748**	**15 071**	**1 016**

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Cartographic Section